

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 05, 2026

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW54

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair VanOrden, Vice Chair Bjerke, Senators Harris, Zuiderveld, Lenney, Shippy, Blaylock, Keyser, and Wintrow

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chair VanOrden** called the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) to order at 3:02 p.m.

RS 33228 **Relating to Rural Health Transformation.** **Senator Cook** explained this legislation was very similar to an RS the Committee reviewed a few days ago. The only difference was the number of appointees to the Rural Health Transformation Program Committee was changed to three senators, three representatives, and one non-voting member appointed by the Governor.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Lenney** asked what the number of appointees was in the original bill. **Senator Cook** stated the first bill had two senators, two representatives, and two non-voting members.

Senator Wintrow asked if the additional senator and representative were added to allow for a Democrat on the committee. **Senator Cook** stated that was not the reason for increasing the number of legislators.

MOTION: **Senator Harris** moved to send **RS 33228** to print. **Senator Keyser** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 32891 **Relating to Petroleum Clean Water Trust Fund Act.** **Senator Blaylock** stated this legislation ensured that state laws were streamlined, up-to-date, and essential for the citizens of Idaho, while best serving public health, safety, and welfare. The Legislature approved the Idaho Code Cleanup Act, 2025 H 14 and submitted sections of Idaho Code were reviewed for repeal. The Idaho DOGE Task Force evaluated sections of code to determine whether they were obsolete, outdated, or unnecessary. This legislation repealed or updated seven sections of the Petroleum Clean Water Trust Fund Act, Chapter 49, Title 41, Idaho Code. The repeals included sections of the initial appointment criteria, references to fee transfers for money earned prior to August 03, 1995, and other obsolete language.

MOTION: **Senator Shippy** moved to send **RS 32891** to print. **Vice Chair Bjerke** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 33010C1 **Relating to Foster Care Placement.** **Senator Galloway** explained this legislation improved Idaho's foster care system by expanding expedited placement eligibility to trusted kin, further ensuring stability for vulnerable children. It also made technical corrections for statutory consistency. The purpose was to improve Idaho's ability to care for foster youth using the lightest touch possible and accomplished this with no fiscal note. The legislation removed the two month hearing requirement for youth in extended foster care. She explained last year's shift to more frequent hearings helped move children to permanent homes faster. However, it unintentionally applied to young adults age 18 to 23 who voluntarily remained in care. Courts asked for this fix to save time and resources. Since these youth could leave the care at any time, it was unnecessary for them to have the additional hearings. Additionally, the legislation expanded expedited placement beyond relatives to include kin. Kin were individuals with significant family-like relationships, and this addition would help move children more quickly to stable, familiar homes.

MOTION: **Senator Harris** moved to send **RS 33010C1** to print. **Senator Keyser** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 33161 **Relating to Medicaid.** **Senator Wintrow** explained the Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities (MWD) program, Idaho Code §56-209n was health insurance for people who work and have a disability. This program was intended to help people with disabilities work and keep health insurance, to support independent living. She explained many individuals with disabilities wanted to continue working beyond the age of 65 and maintain these benefits. After age 65, individuals who wanted to continue working were no longer eligible for the program and faced higher cost shares that sometimes quadrupled. This legislation directed the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to identify and evaluate options, no later than December 1, 2026, within the existing federal Medicaid authority that prioritized continuity for individuals enrolled in or transitioning from the Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities program. The purpose was to keep individuals living independently in their homes and avoid the high cost of institutionalization.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Harris** asked if any other states offered this program. **Senator Wintrow** stated she was not positive, but believed other states offered similar programs. She added there were recent discussions regarding extending the retirement age for all benefits.

Senator Lenney asked if Medicare would fill the gap this legislation was addressing. **Senator Wintrow** explained Medicare did not cover long-term care and she would be happy to provide additional information at the bill hearing.

MOTION: **Senator Harris** moved to send **RS 33161** to print. **Senator Blaylock** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chair VanOrden** adjourned the meeting at 3:17 p.m.

Senator VanOrden
Chair

Madysen Crea
Secretary